

↓ Zuckerman →

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Dear Josh,

I have just read your piece on MSGing and was (as usual) greatly impressed. A number of queries and comments on it:

p. 5 Bottom Would it not be possible to use a CONGEN like procedure to check (atleast superficially) the validity of certain kinds of contributions to a computer generated "literature?" Later on you note that various kinds of disciplines will have to be developed (Bob would call them procedures for the exercise of organized skepticism) to cope with the absence of various gatekeeping procedures now in place in the printed literature system. While CONGEN obviously can't do all that a referee does, it can (I would suppose) check certain kinds of things a referee couldn't (and apparently doesn't). Anyway, it may be that certain kinds of inquiry *are* ~~is~~ subject to mechanical checking more readily than others and one ~~might~~ ^{would} guess that ~~many~~ literatures in such fields which were computer generated might ~~more~~ more quickly acquire the archival function now given to the printed literature.

yes!

p. 7 Your off-hand (tho I know serious) observation on the need for a way to back off from a statement suggests that there might be different kinds of ^{code} communications that ~~could~~ be entered into the system -- ranging from entirely confidential (for one's self alone) through something like "I'm not sure I believe it but. . . " to "I'm pretty sure of this". There ought to be a way of coding the plausibility of a statement such that one can back off by saying, I simply didn't take that seriously as my code will show.

really crazy &

p. 7 The speed of scientific change implied by your Heisenstein scenario is terrifying. Sometime we need to talk about whether this/really makes for better science.
(such rapid increments)

← (Focus of attention is a plus. What is optimum pace?)

p. 8 On what is worth retrieving: Is your guess that some analogue to review papers will serve as a guide to what is worth perusing? Such review papers (and their references) might themselves be entered into the data base. But one can also anticipate that there would then be reviews of review. . .

yes!
yes!

p. 9 On the potential uses of such systems in writing the history of science -- beautiful but one can imagine this developing into a weapon for the most minute calculations on priority. In any case, I have been talking to the American Institute of Physics Librarian about what kinds of archival materials should be kept in the future and will alert her to the possibility of this sort of thing.

Two other items:

You will be getting copies of TMOS if they have not already arrived. You mentioned some time ago that Pat Haggerty should get a copy and Rod Nichols too. Can you take care of this? I doubt that Wiley will send anything to anyone (other than review journals) for free.

Everyone believes in them

I have just seen the marginals on the questions Bob and I put on the Lipset Ladd study. It now looks as though there are virtually no field differences in professors' attitudes toward the norms (that is, humanists don't differ from scientists in this regard). Second, that there seems to be a strong pattern of people saying they subscribe to the norms more strongly than they think others so. Third, that a smaller proportion say they conform most of the time than those who think the norms are compelling and fourth, people think they conform more than do others. The analysis should be very interesting since an "n" of 5500 is a little better than Mitroff's 47 (or was it 49) moon scientists. One datum we will not report (at least in this climate) is that 39% of the sample say that blacks are treated better than others doing work of comparable quality and 23% say the same thing about women.

Love to all,

H
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PS Jon Cole (who has worked with Ruth Ginsberg) says she is always like that -- except when she's performing in public! If so, poor woman.